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Eisenhower Says Officers Should Stay Out of Politics

In TV Interview, He Hits at Extremists
—Believes Khrushchev Is Uneasy
—Doubts a Nuclear War

By LEO EGAN

Former President Dwight D. Eisenhower last night urged officers of the armed services to shun partisan politics.

Speaking as a General of the Army, he declared it was "bad practice—very bad" for an officer, even when testifying under oath before a committee of Congress, to express opinions "on political matters or economic matters that are contrary to the President's."

The military man's role in modern political life was only one of many subjects discussed by the former President in a one-hour interview carried to the nation over the Columbia Broadcasting System's television network. The program was heard in the east from 10 to 11 P. M.

Other areas of the discussion dealt with extremist political activity in the United States, the reasons behind the Soviet

downgrading of Joseph Stalin, the Suez crisis, Communist China, Quemoy and Matsu, the U-2 incident, the value of summit conferences, the possibility of disarmament and the Berlin crisis.

The former President was blunt in discussing the recent "rise of extremists" in the country.

"I don't think the United States needs super-patriots," he declared. "We need patriotism honestly practiced by all of us and we don't need these people that are more patriotic than you or anybody else."

His definition of extremists embraced those who would "go back to eliminating the income tax from our laws and the rights of people to unionize" [and those] advocating some form of dictatorship. "It also in-

cluded those who "make radical statements [and] attack people of good repute who proved patriots."

At that point, Walter Cronkite of the C.B.S. news staff, who conducted the interview, asked about the "military man's role in our modern political life." He did not cite, but obviously referred to, the case of Maj. Gen. Edwin A. Walker, who stirred up a controversy that led to his "admonishment" for the political nature of the indoctrination of his troops. General Walker later resigned from the Army.

View on Officers' Role

"I believe the Army officer, Navy officer, Air officer," General Eisenhower said, "should not be talking about political matters, particularly domestic, and never in the international field, unless he's asked to do so because of some particular position he might hold."

"I do believe that our officers, when they receive recruits, have the need for making certain that these men are loyal people; understanding that they are defending the United States and the things for which she stands—her ideals, her aspirations, her principles, her rights. I do not believe they should try to do this in terms of partisan politics whatsoever."

General Eisenhower viewed the removal of Stalin's body from the Kremlin tomb as evidence that Premier Khrushchev was "feeling uneasy. Noting that the action was taken eight years after the former dictator's death, the General asked:

"Why should he [Khrushchev] find it necessary to go through this kind of macabre exercise to impress somebody? There must be some uneasiness he's feeling ***

"It's a very great puzzle. I would like to see a good intelligence estimate of just what it means."

Strauss Critics Scored

In discussing East-West tensions, the former President likened the wall that the East German Communists were building in Berlin to a prison enclosure designed, not to keep Westerners out, but to keep East Berliners in.

Turning to domestic issues, General Eisenhower said he had never used his powers as President to discipline Republican Senators or Representatives who disagreed with him.

The question arose in connection with the Senate's rejection of his appointment of Lewis W. Strauss as Secretary of Commerce. The rejection, he commented, did not reflect any credit on those who tried to "crucify him."

However, he conceded that he had used all the powers he could to defeat the proposed Bricker amendment to the Constitution. That amendment would have restricted Presidential treaty-

making powers. General Eisenhower said he respected former Senator John W. Bricker of Ohio, the amendment's sponsor, but felt he had been wrong on that subject.

General Eisenhower expressed the opinion that the President had ample powers to deal with international crises in either a shooting war or a cold war. He said he believed the military situation was such now that neither the East nor the West would dare to start a nuclear war.

The former President reported that American military help had been withheld from Vietnam when it was first requested by the French, who were then directing the Vietnam Government, because "a great deal of the rest of the world considered it solely as a French war to sustain a colonial position."

No American military aid was given to Hungary when Soviet troops and tanks were sent there to put down an anti-Communist revolution, because such action lacked United Nations support and because Hungary could not be reached without crossing another country, he explained.

In the case of Lebanon, American military help was given because it had been requested by "a friendly government with whom we had friendly relations," according to General Eisenhower.

As to the Suez crisis in 1956, he said the British and French had been informed in advance that the United States would oppose the use of force to prevent Egypt from taking control of the canal. The United States position was that such action would destroy the United Nations.

"But our action was mis-

understood," he said. "The British press said we had let them down. We hadn't, because we told the government exactly what we would do."

General Eisenhower noted that he had been warned that his actions to restrain Israeli military operations against Egypt in 1956 might cost him re-election. After the action was taken, he recalled, a New York friend remarked: "Well, you lost New York State."

"The fact of it is," the general observed, "I don't think New York State went for any national ticket on a larger majority than it did in 1956 for the ticket I headed."

"So I don't think that sometimes these prophets are very accurate. I think the Jewish vote there indicated that after all they are first Americans and not natives of Israel."

As time goes on, General Eisenhower commented, the problem of what to do about Red China "begins to assume different dimensions." But the problem of Red China's admission to the United Nations, he said, continues to be "very tough" for a number of reasons.

"If Red China ever, itself, will act like a civilized nation, both in its speech and in its actions, well, then there's a new problem going to come up some day; there is no question about that," he declared.

Discussing the U-2 incident that Premier Khrushchev used to justify breaking up the Paris summit meeting, General Eisenhower remarked "there was a lot of theatrics about that."

Mr. Khrushchev, he said, knew for several years before the Paris meeting of the use of U-2's, high-flying American planes with special cameras, to photograph Russian territory.

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